

One type of lung disease is called **Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease** or **COPD** for short. **COPD** means not enough air gets to your lungs and into your blood. There are five important steps you should take when you have this lung disease.

Step 1

If You Smoke, Quit Now

If you don't smoke, or if you have already quit smoking—good for you! The best thing you can do for your health is to quit smoking. Even if you already have lung disease and have smoked for a long time, it helps to quit.

You can quit smoking. Sometimes it takes more than one try to quit smoking. Don't give up. Try these things to help you quit:

- Ask your doctor or clinic about medicine that can help you quit.
- Call the free Illinois Quitline at 1-866-784-8937 to talk to someone about how to quit smoking (TTY: 1-800-501-1068).
- Pick a date to quit smoking and tell your friends and family the date.
- Throw away all your cigarettes, ashtrays and lighters on the day you chose to quit.
- Fill your free time with activities you like to do.
- Do not drink alcohol.



Step 2

Stop Lung Infections

COPD makes it easier for you to get sick. When you get sick, it is hard for your lungs to get better. Lung infections make it harder to breathe. Here are some ways to help keep you from getting sick:

- Get a flu shot every year. Flu shots are paid for by your Illinois healthcare plan.
- Wash your hands with soap many times every day. Be sure to wash before cooking and eating and after using the bathroom.
- Try to stay away from people who are sick.
- Ask your doctor if you should get a pneumonia shot. Pneumonia is when your lungs fill up with fluid.



Step 3

Watch for Signs That Your Lung Disease is Getting Worse

You should call your doctor as soon as you see signs that your breathing problems are getting worse. Do what your doctor tells you to do right away. Here are some signs to watch for:

- You have more trouble breathing.
- You cough more.
- You cough up more stuff from your lungs than usual. Or what you cough up gets darker in color, gets thicker or has streaks of blood in it.
- You have a fever.
- Your breathing makes it hard to sleep.
- You feel more tired.
- You feel sad or down.
- You feel confused.
- You just don't feel good.



Step 4

Take Your Medicines

Medicines for lung disease make it easier to breathe and help you feel better. Medicine can help you when you take it right. Always remember to take your medicines. Take your medicines just the way your doctor tells you to.



Your doctor may give you a tool called an inhaler. An inhaler lets you breathe the medicine into your lungs. Inhalers are small and can be carried in your pocket. At home you may use a nebulizer

to take your medicine. A nebulizer has a mask that goes over your nose and mouth to help push the medicine into your lungs.

It is very important that you use your inhaler or nebulizer the right way. Show your doctor or pharmacist how you use your inhaler or nebulizer. Ask them to tell you if you are using it right. Talk to them any time you have problems using your inhaler or nebulizer.

Step 5

Learn to Breathe Easier

There are two ways to breathe that help your lungs work better:

- 1) Pursed lip breathing** helps you breathe slower and relax.
 - Breathe in slowly through your nose while you count to two. Do this with your mouth closed.
 - Pucker your lips like you are going to whistle.
 - Breathe out slowly through your lips while you count to four.
- 2) Belly breathing** helps you push more air out of your lungs.
 - Breathe in slowly while you let your belly push out.
 - Pucker your lips like you are going to whistle.
 - Breathe out slowly through your lips while you pull your belly in.

Call **1-800-973-6792** to talk to a nurse at **Your Healthcare Plus** if you have any questions or if you have a health concern. If you use a TTY, call **1-888-317-2697** or your local Telecommunications Relay Service to talk to a nurse. To find out more, go to **www.yourhealthcareplus.com**.

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Living with COPD

Helping You Breathe Easier



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